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July 30, 2010

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The Honorable Robert Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Gates,

I am writing to you today to voice my strong support for the Boeing Company as the recipient of the Department of Defense contract to rebuild the U.S. Air Force's fleet of aerial refueling supertankers. This project has tremendous potential to benefit my home state of Iowa, as well as numerous advantages for the whole country.

The Boeing refueling supertanker has been found to be less cumbersome in flight than its competing model for the military contract, foreign-owned Airbus. In addition, Boeing's supertanker allows for more accurate pilot maneuverability, resulting in more efficient refueling capabilities for our soldiers than the French-based Airbus. Because of Boeing's experience and dependability, their model is the right choice for the contract over the contender's aircraft. In fact, Airbus cannot compare to the time-tested Boeing Company and their seasoned experience of producing jets since 1956. The European aircraft manufacturer has only produced a handful of tankers. What's more, Boeing's model would cost U.S. taxpayers billions less to purchase, maintain and fuel. It seems exceptionally clear to me that accepting the tanker bid from Airbus would be fiscally irresponsible.

Nowhere is the fiscal impact of this contract more evident, though, than in Boeing's ability to bring approximately 55,000 jobs to technological and engineering workers in the United States. Specifically, Iowans have been hit especially hard in this present economic crisis. However, should Boeing receive the contract to build the supertanker, 800 new manufacturing jobs would be created in my home state, not to mention the prosperous effect it would have on current and potential Iowa Boeing suppliers. In contrast, Airbus falls short in its promise to bring growth to the American economy. Should the French Aircraft company receive the bid for the military contract, only 5,000-6,000 jobs will be created in the United States, constituting only 5% of the total design and manufacturing positions created overall for their model. The rest of the operation will be centered in Europe.

I strongly encourage you to move swiftly in your decision to rebuild the tanker fleet. Boeing's model is the wisest choice as the recipient of this contract, and I hope

you will award them this opportunity. Together with the U.S. taxpayer, aerospace worker, and Air Force pilot, I thank you for your consideration of Boeing, an American company.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruce L. Braley", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Bruce L. Braley  
Member of Congress